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## REVIEWS.

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### OCCUPATION STATISTICS OF THE TWELFTH CENSUS.

The Twelfth Census surpasses all its predecessors in the amount of space devoted to statistics of occupations. Over 125 pages were given to this subject in the second volume of population statistics, published in 1902. Last year there appeared a special report, "Occupations at the Twelfth Census," containing more than 1,000 pages. Finally, I understand, a critical discussion of the methods and results of the inquiry is being prepared by a competent hand under the supervision of Professor Walter F. Willcox.

But, despite the marked increase in the amount of space devoted to occupations, it is clear that the results attained leave room for great improvement in the future. This fact, it is pleasant to note, is best understood by the Bureau of the Census itself. The reader of the special report referred to finds that the men who prepared it have sought, not to conceal, but to expose the numerous defects of the figures. The function of the critic is here performed by men attached to the office that compiled the tables. This is as it should be. For, on the one hand, no men have so good an opportunity to see the defects of any statistical tables as the men who have gotten them together; and, on the other hand, no criticisms promise so much for future improvement as those made by men intrusted with the direction of future work.

The occupation of the outside critic is not gone, however, because the inside critic has appeared. The outsider may still perform a useful service in aiding to secure attention to the criticisms of the insider. He may also, as a consumer of statistics, find imperfections which inside critics have overlooked or underestimated. His efforts in either direction are doubtless welcomed by the responsible officials of the bureau. In making criticisms of his own, however, the outsider should recognize that he may make mistakes, or be unwittingly unfair, through lack of intimate acquaintance with the practical difficulties that the Bureau of the Census encounters. Those outside critics are likely to speak with most confidence and most asperity who know least of the processes of collecting data through an ill-trained army of enumerators, of compiling tables through a regi-

ment of clerks, and of preparing volumes for publication amidst the distractions of a busy office. It behooves the critic not familiar with these matters to have a care how he imputes blame or tells what ought to be done at the next census.

These remarks apply with special force to the outside critic of the statistics of occupations, because of the special technical difficulties presented by this branch of census work. Experience abroad as at home has shown that there is no inquiry on the population schedule to which it is more difficult to get satisfactory replies, and that there are no returns more difficult to classify. The bewildering complexity of modern economic organization makes it almost impossible to present in any census report a full and accurate description of the population as a body of bread-winners. These inherent difficulties are, of course, materially enhanced in the United States, where the work of enumeration is intrusted to inexperienced men, where the inquiry concerning occupations is but one among the many inquiries of an elaborate population schedule, and where such a wide diversity of economic development is presented by different sections of the country. The greater the technical difficulties that beset any branch of census work, the less is the outside critic able to judge justly the merit of what is done, and the less is he able to instruct the bureau as to what it should do in the future.

There is still another reason why the outside critic should hesitate to express decided opinions about the occupation statistics of the Twelfth Census at the present moment. As has been said, the Bureau of the Census is not yet done with occupations. A critical discussion of the subject is still to come. Not until the bureau has published its final critical estimate of its work can any one form a just estimate of the work's merit. In writing of "Occupations at the Twelfth Census," therefore, I shall confine myself mainly to calling attention to criticisms that the bureau itself has made. And, while I shall venture a few additional criticisms of my own, I shall not be surprised if the appearance of the critical discussion from Professor Willcox's department proves them to have been anticipated by the bureau.

The first chapter of the special report describes briefly the manner of enumerating and classifying occupations. It is pointed out that the accuracy of the tables depends upon the accuracy of the field-work performed by the 53,000 census enumerators. These enumerators were supplied with a circular of instructions in which a large share of space was devoted to detailed directions about the way in which occupations ought to be reported; but there was little oppor-

tunity for supplementing these printed directions by personal instructions, or for examining and correcting the work of the enumerators before sending their schedules to Washington. Such being the case, it is not surprising to learn that, when the schedules were received by the bureau, many cases of obvious errors were found upon them, and other cases in which the bureau thought that errors had been made, but could not be certain. "As a result," the report says, "there is undoubtedly an element of indefiniteness and inaccuracy and possibly omission in the returns, which under a permanent census organization can be very nearly, if not wholly, eliminated" (p. xxi.). This expression of confidence in the improvement of the field-work in 1910 is very encouraging. The means suggested for securing it are closer supervision of the enumerators and the examination and correction of schedules in the offices of supervisors before forwarding to the central office.

Another suggestion for improving the field-work has been made by Professor John Cummings. It is that definitions of occupations which enumerators are likely to confuse be inserted in the printed circular of instructions. For example, the instructions for 1900 contained many paragraphs like the following:—

"182. Distinguish a *journalist*, *editor*, or *reporter*, from an *author* or other literary person who does not follow journalism as a distinct profession."

Professor Cummings suggests that such terms as *journalist*, *editor*, *reporter*, and *author* "should be carefully defined *for*, not *by*, the enumerator," for the reason that enumerators left to make their own distinctions will use the same terms in varying senses. This suggestion seems to an outsider—particularly an academic outsider—to be worthy of adoption. But I am not certain that it will commend itself as strongly to the officials of the Census Bureau. I have found that experienced officials, who have come into direct contact with enumerators, lay great stress on the necessity for brevity in the instructions. They say that enumerators, unfamiliar with books or clerical work as they often are, frequently become muddled when called upon to read elaborate instructions. They do not understand formal definitions clearly, still less do they remember them. It would certainly be desirable for the enumerator to carry his circular of instructions with him on his rounds, and, when a woman tells him that her husband is a *journalist*, to cross-question her about the character of her husband's work, and then consult the definitions of occupations in the circular to see whether her use of *journalist* corresponds to that

of the census. But the experienced official will probably doubt whether the average enumerator, paid at so much a name, and unaccustomed to make nice distinctions in the use of common terms, would do all this, and do it correctly. Of course, the rejoinder may be made that men who are unable or unwilling to exercise such care in their work ought not be appointed enumerators. But the fact is, unfortunately, that men of imperfect qualifications must frequently be taken, because better men are not to be had for the work. Professor Cummings's suggestion is certainly one that the officials who draft the instructions for 1910 ought to consider very carefully; but it may be that their knowledge of the psychology of the enumerator will make it seem to them likely to create more confusion than it removes. If, however, the permanent organization of the bureau makes it possible to secure a better class of enumerators, the danger of over-elaborate instructions will be less.\*

Passing from the work of enumeration to that of classification, the report states that the scheme of classification used in 1900 adheres "in all essential particulars to the classification of 1890." Four changes were made in the assignment of occupations to the grand classes; *e.g.*, "Engineers and Firemen (not Locomotive)" were transferred from "Domestic and Personal Service" to "Manufacturing and Mechanical Pursuits." Further, the number of occupation designations presented in the tables was increased from 218 to 303, and these designations were more conveniently grouped. But the changes are changes in detail only, and the classification remains substantially that of previous years.

With this classification it is easy to find fault. The principle of classification is, "in a general way at least," the "kind of work done or character of service rendered." About the desirability of possessing a classification based on this principle there can be no dispute. The numerous reports on special industries, together with the large reports on agriculture and manufacturing, give a fairly good classification of population according to industries. The occupation tables ought to supplement this exhibit by a classification based on a different principle, and the most significant principle seems to be "kind of work." But, if there is only one opinion about the desirability of having a classification based upon this principle, there is also only one opinion about the ill success attending the application of it, as matters now stand. As the report says, this principle could not be followed

\* John Cummings, "Occupations in the Twelfth Census," *Journal of Political Economy*, December, 1904.

consistently. The chief difficulty arose from the indefiniteness of the entries made by enumerators in the occupation column. In many cases, in spite of explicit directions to the contrary, enumerators reported occupations in terms so general that the clerks of the central office could not determine what kind of work the person really did. The result was that

... "In general . . . it was necessary to classify persons engaged in manufacturing and mechanical pursuits under general designations denoting the place of work or article produced rather than under specific terms indicating the kind of work done." . . . (p. xxvi).

How serious is the harm to the tables resulting from the vagueness of the enumerators' descriptions is shown by the following statement:—

... "The proportion of indefiniteness in the returns of the groups of workers comprehending such general designations as makers, workers, employees, laborers, etc., ranges from one-fifth to one-half of the total number of persons in each group" (p. xxvi).

Such results are, of course, far from satisfactory to the Census Bureau or to the student. How the results can be improved, however, is a puzzling question that will doubtless receive much attention from the officials of the bureau before 1910. None but the men who are intimately acquainted with the work of enumeration can give advice of value about the betterment of the classification, for the feasibility of any scheme of classifying occupations depends on the possibility of getting the information which that scheme presupposes recorded on the schedules. Some of the remarks in the present report seem to hint that the old classification was retained in 1900 chiefly from lack of time to arrange a more logical and more practical scheme. This particular difficulty will not embarrass the officials of the permanent bureau, and economists will be interested to see what use they are able to make of their ample time. But to the outsider their problem seems a baffling one, even with abundant time to study it. The officials will be loath to give up the old principle of classification, and loath to make changes in its application that will destroy the formal comparability of the new and old tables. But they will also be loath to publish again tables containing so many headings devoid of all significance. And, even if they succeed in drawing up a logical scheme of classification, they must still face the difficulty of securing through enumerators the information concerning occupations necessary to apply it.

But, while an outsider gladly leaves this problem to the insiders, he can offer one suggestion growing out of his attempts to understand the tables, and applicable to any classification that may be adopted. In publishing elaborate tables, it is necessary to use single words or brief phrases for the hundreds of "occupation designations," because fuller descriptions would take too much space. But the student of the tables is frequently unable to judge from these brief designations just what persons are grouped under them. Such designations as "Artists and Teachers of Art," "Electricians," "Journalists," "Literary and Scientific Persons," etc., are by no means free from ambiguity. Under each were doubtless placed persons whose occupations were described on the schedules in many different ways. In compiling tables from the schedules, the "punching clerks" must be provided with an index of occupations to show to which one of the three or four hundred designations that appear in the published tables each of the thousands of entries that appear on the schedules is to be assigned. The meaning of these designations would be rendered clearer if this index were published. In publishing the index, however, it would probably be best to arrange the items, not in alphabetical order, but in groups under the designations to which each is assigned.\*

The second chapter of the report presents a careful comparison of occupations at the twelfth and preceding censuses. This comparison exhibits the changes that have been made from decade to decade in the manner of enumeration and classification, and includes a rearrangement of the earlier results in such form as to make them as nearly comparable as possible with those of 1900. But the reader is left no excuse for assuming that he can take the figures of the several censuses as representing accurately the changes that have taken place in the numbers of persons engaged in all the occupations listed.

Chapter III provides an elaborate summary and analysis of the results of the Twelfth Census. Here, again, the compilers have been commendably careful in calling attention to the probable inaccuracy of many of the figures. A set of maps and diagrams intended to present the most important results in graphic form is added. Appendices give the instructions to enumerators concerning the occupation in-

\* I may add that I have learned the value of the index of occupations from experience. I had an opportunity to study the tables of the Eleventh Census with the index in my hands, and found in numerous cases that the "designations" include persons of whom I should not have thought had not the index been before me. The "designations" are in fact more ambiguous than they seem to be, and even a careful student may make mistakes in using the tables unless he has the fuller knowledge that only the index can give.

quiry at the last four censuses, and a summary of the State laws concerning the employment of children. The general tables that follow are arranged in admirably systematic form. The first set gives the results for the whole United States, the second set for the several States, and the third set for the principal cities.

A discussion of these results does not lie within the scope of this paper, but there are two points connected with the manner of presentation on which comment may be made. The first is a matter of terminology. It has been the custom in federal censuses to use the cumbersome phrase "Persons Engaged in Gainful Occupations," or some equally cumbersome variant, to designate all those of whom the occupation tables take account. In the special report for 1900 this practice is generally followed; but in some places where limits of space make a briefer phrase necessary—*e.g.*, in the figures of Plate No. 1—the term "Wage-earners" is substituted. Now it would be well to drop the longer phrase altogether if a good brief substitute could be found; but it is certain that the substitute used in the present report is not good. A very large part of the "Persons Engaged in Gainful Occupations" are not wage-earners at all—*e.g.*, farmers—and to call them such will assuredly give rise to misconceptions among hasty readers. Why not use the less misleading term "breadwinners"? This term has been used in some foreign tables of occupations,—notably in Australasian censuses,—and was introduced into American use in the censuses of Cuba and Porto Rico, taken under the supervision of the War Department. It is not mere pedantry to object to the cumbersome "Persons Engaged in Gainful Occupations," and to the misleading "Wage-earners," when so brief and clear a term as "breadwinners" is available.

The second point concerns the presentation of statistics of unemployment. On the population schedule, adjoining the column headed "Occupation," was a narrow column headed "Months not Employed." In this column, enumerators were instructed to enter "the number of months (or parts of months)" of the census year during which "each and every person ten years of age and over who was engaged in gainful labor . . . was unable to secure work of any kind." Now I have been unable to find, either in the tables of unemployment or in the accompanying text, any record of cases in which enumerators failed to make entries in this column according to their directions. Is the reader to infer that there were no such omissions? The inference is hardly credible. But, if cases of omission occurred, what was done with them? I cannot find that they were tabulated separately. Were they divided according to some assumed rule between the cases



definitely reported as unemployed and the cases not so reported? If so, the report is silent about the fact. Or, when no return was made, did the bureau assume that the person in question was steadily employed during the full year? If so, the fact ought to be frankly stated, and the reasons justifying such an assumption given. The matter seems to me one of importance for the good name of the Bureau of the Census. Many persons are prone to say that the bureau's work is colored by a desire to make the country appear "prosperous." Allegations of this character are more plausible in connection with the inquiry into unemployment than in connection with any other inquiry on the population schedule. Hence it is particularly desirable that the bureau should protect itself by making a full and candid statement of just how the tables were constructed. It is unfortunate to leave room for the suspicion that a point was stretched to reduce the apparent prevalence of unemployment. The matter ought to have been cleared up in the special report; but, since it has not been, the critical discussion ought to remedy the omission.

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### ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE JEWS IN RUSSIA.

*Sources.*—The following article has been based entirely upon a recent work in two volumes, published in St. Petersburg in 1904 by the Jewish Colonization Society, and entitled "Economic Conditions of the Jews in Russia."

In preparing these volumes, the Society utilized material from three independent sources.

1. The Jews in cities and towns within the Pale,—that is, the 25 governments of Russia in which the Jews are allowed to live—were studied with the help of 1,000 correspondents of the Society, who visited about 1,200 different communities. Their investigation was made in 1898.

2. The Jewish agricultural colonies were investigated by agents of the Society, who made a house-to-house canvass. In 1898, 208 colonies, containing 60,000 inhabitants, were visited.

3. The Jews outside the Pale were officially investigated, under the supervision of the Minister of the Interior, in 1893.

The data of the first census of 1897 have been extensively used, whenever available.

The facts cannot be accepted as entirely accurate, the margin of